November 10, 1915.

FEIJOA SELLOWIANA

Mr. F. W. Popenoe, Agricultural Explorer for the U. S. Department of Agriculture and an authority on tropical and subtropical horticulture, writes in the Pomona College Journal of Economic Botany, February, 1912, as follows:

"Among the fruits which have been offered as commercial possibilities in California there are few which possess such intrinsic merit as the one here considered.

"The Feijoa is comparatively new to horticulture. It has been in cultivation but twenty years, and in this country scarcely ten. . . . .

"But here is a shrub, unusually valuable as an ornamental—so much so that it is grown as a pot plant for the beauty of its foliage and flowers in European conservatories. To this attractiveness, and greatly overshadowing it, is added the value of the fruit—of oval shape, greenish in color, highly perfumed, and with a flavor indescribably delicate and delicious. Supplementing these qualities, and augmenting them, is its hardiness. The Feijoa will grow and thrive not only in California, but throughout the entire coast region, and across the continent from the Pacific to the Atlantic, in the southern belt embraced within the Gulf states. Certainly few plants can offer such an appeal to public favor. Everyone who is familiar with the Feijoa to a sufficient degree, has the greatest confidence in its future. It is a fruiting shrub of sterling excellence. As a commercial fruit it offers great promise. Its admirable shipping and keeping qualities justify for it an expectation that it will become a market fruit of the first class."

In growth and character the Feijoa (pronounced, according to the Century Dictionary, Fay-zho-a, accenting the middle syllable) much resembles the common guavas, and is sometimes called Pineapple Guava. It is, in fact, closely related to the guavas, all being members of the common order Myrtaceae, or myrtle family. The plant grows to an ultimate height of eight or ten feet and sometimes as high as fifteen feet, making a very ornamental shrub, with brilliant and attractive flowers, silvery white in color, with a tuft of crimson stamens tipped with golden anthers. The foliage is of a pleasing combination, glossy green above and silvery white beneath. Planted as a hedge or border it combines utility with beauty.

The fruits are about the shape and size of a hen's egg, green in color, with sometimes a touch of crimson on the cheek. Next to the skin is a layer of granular flesh, which surrounds a quantity of white, translucent, melting pulp, in which the seeds are embedded. The fruit is one of the most delicious imaginable, combining the flavors of pineapple, raspberry, strawberry and banana, and has a delightful aromatic odor. The seeds are thirty to fifty in number and so small that they can not be felt in the mouth.

The fruit is commonly eaten out of hand, but it can be cooked in almost any way, crystalized, made into jams or jellies, or prepared in numerous other forms, in any of which it is delicious.

The plants are propagated in several ways, viz, by seed, cuttings, layering, grafting and inarching, but as a rule they are grown from seed. In growing from seed great care should be taken to select seeds from superior fruits that have grown on plants that have proven to be prolific bearers, as the seed is likely to perpetuate the characteristics of the fruit and plant from which it is taken. Mr. Popenoe says: "Of the first introduction to Europe, that of Dr. Andre, at least one hundred seedlings have been grown and fruited. These seedlings all exhibit the distinguishing characters of the parent to a greater or less degree, and even in the second and third generation these characters are maintained by the majority of individuals. Allowance must be made for an occasional 'break,' or departure from the type, but these seem to be less frequent than with most other fruits." He says that these seedlings of the Andre type maintain their distinguishing characteristics in California as well as in France, and that in general it may be said that seedlings perpetuate the characteristics of the parent. Seedlings usually come into bearing at three or four years of age.

He further says: "While the Feijio cannot be said to be particular in its cultural requirements, yet best results in both growth and fruit can only be obtained by giving careful attention to the needs of the plant and supplying them in as great a degree as possible.

"In California the Feijoa has been successfully grown in soils of at least two kinds—sandy loam and heavy clay or adobe. And while it has succeeded in both, there is little doubt but that the lighter soil is the best. And it is of paramount importance that the soil contain an abundance of humus. . . .

"That the Feijoa is drought-resistant has been thoroughly demonstrated. A ten-year-old plant in Dr. Franceschi's garden at Santa Barbara has never had a drop of water except from the skies, and yet it has made a fair growth and is bearing regularly. And while the fruit grown without irrigation is probably of very fine flavor, it is probably not advisable to subject the plant regularly to such severe conditions. A liberal supply of water during the first few years results in much greater growth and more fruit. After the fifth or sixth year a large amount of water is not required, but for best results it is

necessary to irrigate the Feijoa as frequently as citrus fruits. During the blooming season water should be withheld as much as possible, and until after the fruits have set, when it may be applied liberally to assist in the development of the fruits.

"Fertilizers of all kinds must be applied with caution, or they will stimulate the growth of the plant at the expense of the fruit. A small quantity of bone meal, or some other form of commercial fertilizer not too rich in nitrogen, may be advantageously applied each year, as it increases both the quantity and size of the fruit. Well rotted manure can be used to supply the much-needed humus, and should be used liberally, but any manure that greatly stimulates the growth of the plant should be avoided, unless it is in the case of young plants which have not yet come into bearing.

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"The Feijoa requires but little pruning. A judicious use of the shears is of course necessary to keep the bush in good form, and when it is desired to train it to any particular shape a more liberal pruning may be necessary. But as the fruit is produced on the young wood, pruning of a mature bush must be done at the expense of fruit, although it will naturally result in increased size of those produced. As the bush is frequently of open and spreading growth, and inclined to be somewhat straggling in the young stage, it is necessary to prune sufficiently to make it shapely. This point should be kept constantly in mind and the shears not withheld from an unshapely plant. The tips of long shoots should be pinched out to induce the plant to branch and form a compact body."

The plants should be planted about 10 x 12 feet apart, although some say fifteen to eighteen feet, if any cultivating is to be done between them after they are mature. It is best to plant several together as they seem to fruit better than way, through interpollination, whereas where one is planted alone the pollination often seems imperfect and fruiting in such cases is not satisfactory.

The season of blooming, at least in California, is May and June, and the season of ripening is November to January. Mr. Popenoe says on this point:

"In most cases the fruits fall when mature, but are not then ready for eating. They should be laid away in a cool place until they are in condition for use, which can be detected by their becoming slightly soft, and also by the odor—a fragrance that is most delightful.

"The fruits should be allowed to hang on the bush as long as they will do so, as they increase in size up to the moment they fall, and their growth during the last few weeks is much more rapid than at any other time. If picked before fully mature they will ripen sufficiently to be eatable, but lack much of the delicate flavor which characterizes a perfect fruit.

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"Two strong points in favor of the Feijoa are its remarkable keeping and shipping qualities. Many fruits which have been grown in California have been kept in the house for three or four weeks, at the end of which time they were in perfect condition for eating.

"As the fruits ordinarily fall when mature, and must be laid away for several days before in condition for eating, they can be shipped to a considerable distance and arrive in perfect condition, having ripened up in transit.

"According to Alfred Revier of Marseilles, the fruit can be kept from the time it is harvested, November or December, until spring, if stored in a cool, moist place. It is essential that the place of storage be cool, as otherwise the fruit will soon decay.

"Fruits have been shipped from France to California, and arrived in perfect condition after having been over a month in transit.

"The hard, dry wood and tough, leathery foliage of the Feijoa render it almost immune from the attacks of insects or fungus growths. So far as has been observed, the only insect that attacks it is the Black Scale *(Saissetia oleae)*, and instances of a thorough infestation of the plant by this species are extremely rare, even though Feijoas be planted in close proximity to other trees which are badly infested."

The Feijoa is a native of southern Brazil and Uruguay, and has proved hardy wherever tried in California, standing without harm a temperature as low as 10 deg. Fahr. above zero. It has been grown in California for over twelve years and has thoroughly proved its adaptability to the climate in every respect, and Mr. Popenoe says that the Pacific Coast is pre-eminently adapted to it, its successful cultivation at many points from San Diego to as far north as Eugene, Oregon, proving this beyond the possibility of a doubt.

The Feijoa is strongly recommended for trial in any location in the United States where the temperature does not fall below 10 deg. Fahr. above zero.

The stock I offer is grown from selected fruits from the best bearing trees in southern France, where the Feijoa has been cultivated for over twenty years and superior forms have originated. Price, field grown, 3 feet, $1.50 each; these are three years old and are now bearing and are magnificent plants and the first orders will get the plants that show the best bearing proclivities. Either balled, or bare roots packed in moss. Field grown, 2 feet, $1.00; about two years old and very fine plants. Pot grown, from 4 inch pots, cut back to 12 or 15 inches, 50c each, or 60c postpaid. Safe arrival guaranteed.

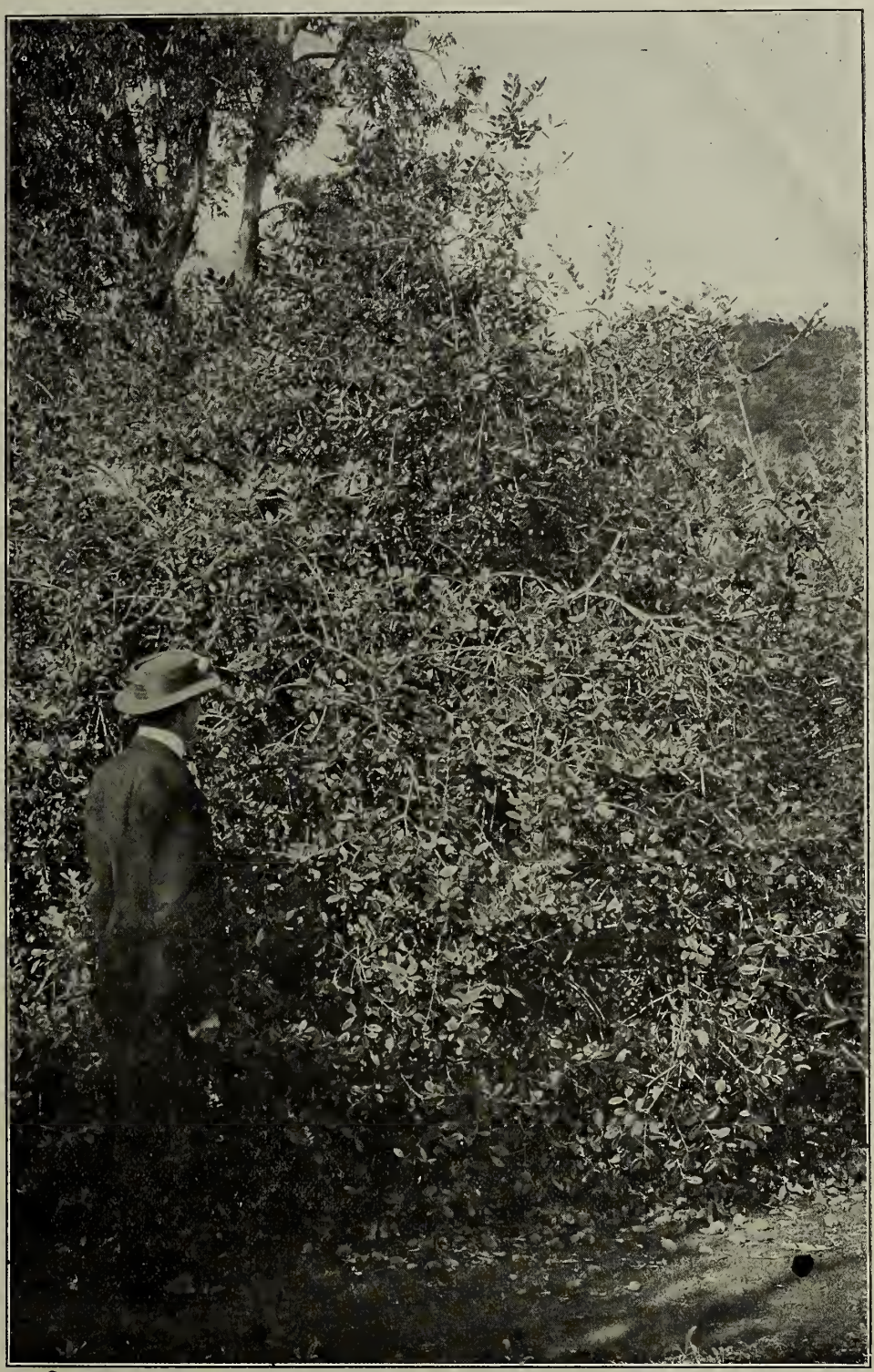

Figure 1.—The first Feijoa planted in Europe. This plant was brought from Uruguay in 1890 by the late Dr. Edouard Andre and planted at the Villa Colombia, Golfe-Juan. It is the parent of the majority of Feijoas in both Europe and North America.

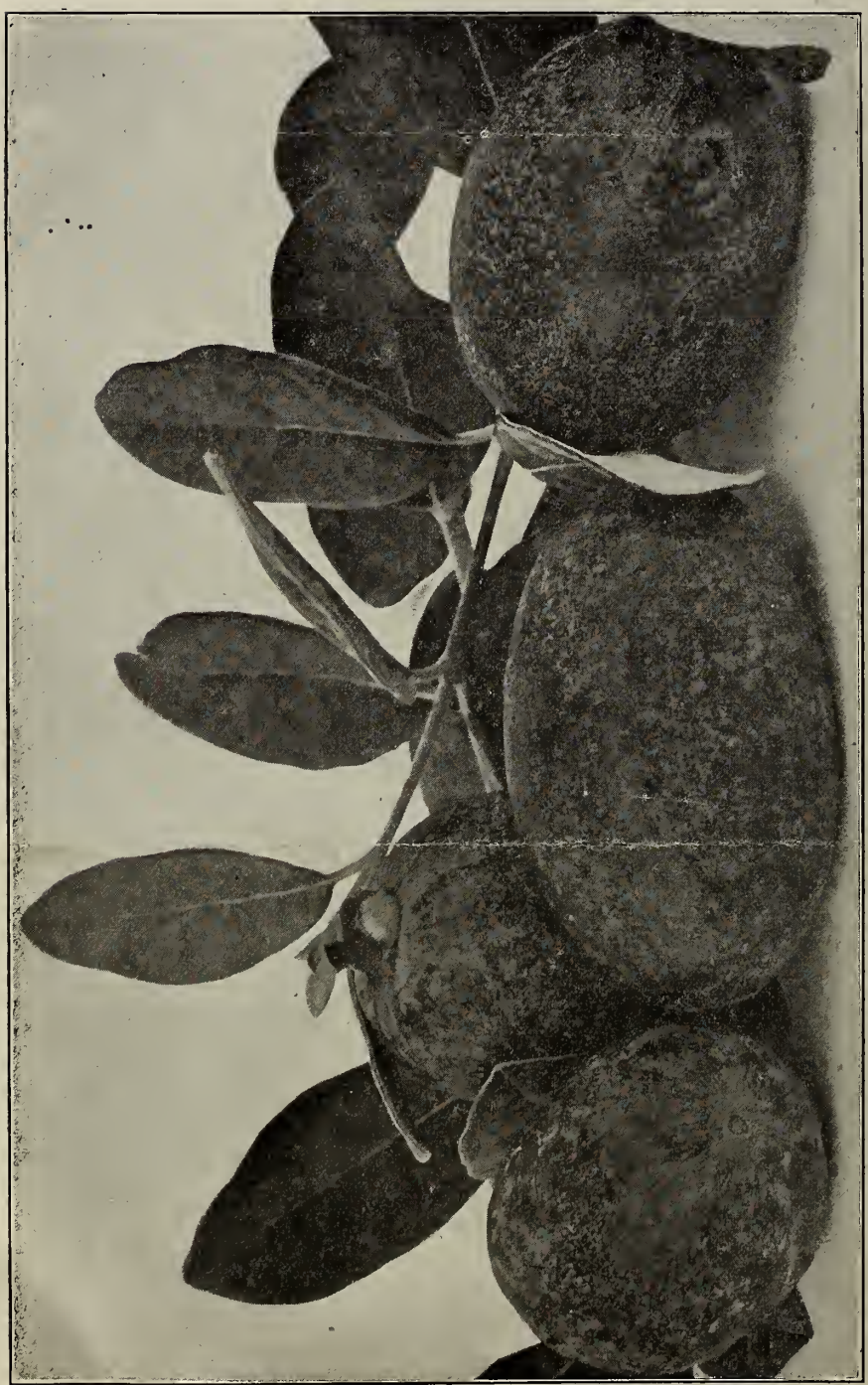

Figure 2.—Fruits of an Andre seedling grown at Marseilles, France, natural size.